

1. Mirror arms, headboard & ladder brackets, pipe work

If you wish to add any of these items, the 0.5mm holes are best drilled at the same time as item 6 in the “**Vehicle Assembly**” sheet that you have previously received. If these items are drilled and glued in at this stage, they can be painted with the rest of the vehicle to avoid further drilling when finished.

2. Paintbrushes

It is often assumed that sable hair brushes will give the best results, as they are the most expensive. I started with these but have found that nylon brushes are equally effective, and a fraction of the price. Brushes are best purchased from a good art shop and not the ones displayed with paints and other accessories in model shops. The ones I use have a varnished wood handle and are made by ProArte and labelled Prolene+Plus 007. Do check the tips at the time of purchase by dipping in water and checking that the tip is fine because they do tend to vary. For small areas and fine detail, buy no.2 or preferably no.3 brushes that have a fine, sharp tip. Remember that the tip is more important than the brush size. As the tip dulls, move the brush down to more general work like chassis touching in, etc. For large areas, a no.5 or no.7 brush is better for a smooth, even finish. Avoid 0-00000 brushes like the plague, as it is not possible to achieve a fine tip with these sizes.

3. Painting tyres

Add a touch of matt grey and red to matt black for more authentic tyre walls. Tyres are rarely black except straight out of the show room, they usually have a coating of dust and some rust from the wheel rim and adding these colours will help achieve this. Paint the tread surface matt black plus a coat of Klear.

4. Enhanced radiator detail

To highlight the bars or mesh finish of radiators, mix white spirit with matt black in a 10-1 dilute wash. Flood on to the radiator and a capillary effect should spread this across the entire area. If a puddle forms in one corner, blot away with the edge of a reasonably dry brush. With practice, this will effectively enhance the radiator detail.

5. Realistic headlights

All of our headlights are now milled out to emulate concave headlight reflectors. These can be enhanced with glazing. It is possible to buy jewelled or moulded accessory packs for headlights but these can work out quite expensive. To avoid this expense, purchase a rotary leather punch from a shoe repairer for approx. £10, which is probably equivalent to two or three packs of headlight lenses but once purchased, the rest is free. To glaze most of our headlights, use the smallest (2.5mm) punch with either acetate or plastiglaze off cuts, to punch glazed circles. Brush on a little Marvin Medium or PVA to the lamp rim and apply the glazed circle with scalpel tip, tweezers, or blue-tack on a cocktail stick. The leather punch will push these out in a concave/convex shape; ensure that they are applied to the headlamp rim with the convex side outward. Finally seal over with Klear.

6. Applying silver paint

A lot of carefully built and painted models are spoilt by the final act of applying silver paint to bright parts such as, windscreen surrounds, radiators, lights, bright mouldings etc. Very few people can actually put silver paint on a brush and apply it perfectly without deviating over the edges. The best tool I have found to minimise this, is a silver “Uni Paint Marker”, made by Mitsubishi Pencil Co. and is sold in Wilkinson hardware stores. It has a felt tip instead of a roller ball, and dries quickly. This can be applied with greater precision to the necessary areas, but even with this, some overlap is probable. Once dry (which is very quick), apply a coat of Klear. This silver won't drag when over painted as other silvers do, but a coat of Klear will prevent it completely. Whatever colour it has overlapped onto, take a part brushful onto your mixing board with a fine tipped No. 2 or 3 brush and carefully paint up to the edges of the trim, radiator, headlamp etc. Allow to dry, then coat over with

Klear, applying a second coat of both paint and Klear if necessary. This method can also be used where two colours differ (mudguard, side of cab etc.), to similar effect.

7. Direction indicators and rear lights

Obviously these can be painted with orange and red paint respectively, but there is a better way. Initially, paint all of these items in silver and then apply Humbrol 1321 Red Clear to rear lamps and reflectors. Use Humbrol 1322 Orange Clear for flasher lenses. When applied over silver, this gives the impression of a clear plastic lens as used on the real thing.

The best method of applying these colours is to taper the end of a cocktail stick, apply the paint to the cocktail stick and then apply straight on to the required area. On cabs with rectangular (rabbit's ear) flashers, the orange colour may leech on to the cab panel when applied. Allow to dry and then touch in with the correct body colour, using the method described in item 6 above.

8. Masking for colour separation or spraying

Whilst I favour brush painting, there is no doubt that for certain items requiring a white finish, spraying is much better. I always use Halford's white primer and always buy the 500ml can, which is only £1, more than the 300ml size.

I use this for anything that will have a white, yellow or orange finish (yellow and orange shades are aerosols mixed at car paint stores, chosen from their range of colour swatches). I have never succeeded in applying these shades smoothly by brush. The exception being white cab roofs and rear cross members for BRS vehicles, which are always brush finished.

Two cabs come to mind that had front grille/ bumper panels in white direct from the factory. These are the Bedford KM and MkI Ford D series for which the rest of the cab should be masked off. The best masking tape for this is Tamiya sold in dispensers in 6 and 18mm widths. Even the thin one is too wide to wrap around the grille perimeter without gaps, which will allow overspray to penetrate. Cut off a length 5mm longer than the width of the cab and lay on to your cutting mat. Using a scalpel and straight edge, cut into 6x1mm widths. These 1mm wide lengths have a greater degree of flexibility to be used around the perimeter of the grille area, and will adhere tightly without any gaps. Overlay the remainder of the strips, working out from the perimeter strip until all has been used up. Now use wider tape to completely mask the entire cab. One coat of spray evenly applied, should be sufficient.

The complex white, blue and silver livery of 60-70s era Birds Eye vehicles is a good example to explain using strips of tape for colour separation.

Before the entire cab and body are fitted to the chassis, spray them both all over in white. I use Blue Tack to secure both parts to my record turntable "spray booth", to prevent them blowing away with the aerosol pressure.

When completely dry (overnight), apply a coat of Klear to both cab and body. Using 1mm strips of Tamiya tape, mark out the separation line for the area to be sprayed silver. Leaving the proposed silver area exposed, mask in the rest of the cab and body with a wider tape. Spray the silver area (silver not containing cellulose), removing the tape if possible before the paint sets. This prevents an "eyebrow" forming between the white and silver as it dries.

When dry, apply a coat of Klear over both white and silver. Once more using 1mm wide tape set out the areas for blue paint. Use the mixing chart (sheet 5) for the correct shade. Apply by brush, allow to dry then apply Klear on to the blue only, apply a second coat of blue, if no patching is visible remove tape, or another coat of Klear and a third coat of blue if necessary. Remove the tape; applying a final coat of Klear over all white, silver and blue areas.

1mm wide strips can be used in a variety of places to good effect, such as the curve of a front screen panel where the top and bottom of a cab need to be different colours.